

tion as scholars and divines. With the exception of Patrick Hamilton, the brilliant, far-travelled humanist, and George Wishart, who, like Hamilton, was a scholar as well as a reformer, they were men of obscure life and limited culture.

The first of them, James Resby, a Lollard preacher who was burned at Perth in 1406 or 1407, had probably long been forgotten, except perhaps among the Lollard sectaries of Ayrshire, who were haled before James IV. by Archbishop Blakadder of Glasgow, in 1494, on a charge of heresy. Twenty-five years after the martyrdom of Resby, another heretic, Paul Craw of Bohemia, who might have imbibed the tenets of Wicklif from John Hus himself, was burned at St Andrews (1433). Nevertheless, as the inquisition of Blakadder proves, there had been a continuity of Lollard dissent from the days of Resby and Craw to those of Hamilton, and fresh proof of the fact has been forthcoming during recent years. One of these Ayrshire Lollards, Murdoch Nisbet of Hardhill, in the parish of Loudon, translated Purvey's version of Wicklifs New Testament into Scots shortly after the accession of James V. The persecution of these sectaries in the reign of James IV. evidently continued into that of his successor. Nisbet, we are told in an old account of his life, was forced to "flee overseas," and it was during his years of exile that, according to the same authority, he made his Scottish version of the New Testament. Murdoch with two of his associates, Pursell (a Franciscan friar) and Kennedy, ventured tack to Scotland, in spite of severe edicts against dissenters, and succeeded in evading the inquisitors by living in a vault beneath his house. The alertness in the persecution of heretics was quickened by the discovery that Lutheran books were being smuggled into the land through the east coast ports that maintained a thriving trade with those of North Germany and the Netherlands. Tyndale's New Testament, too, in due time found its way by the same channel from Antwerp to St Andrews. The fact is endorsed by an Act of Parliament, of date 1525, denouncing the penalty of forfeiture of goods and imprisonment against the foreign importers of such works and their abettors within the realm. The prohibition was evidently not very effective, for it was necessary to renew it ten years later. In that interval not